

The Chicago Cubs: An Enduring Tradition

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The Windy City is home to many prominent landmarks. One of those landmarks is Wrigley Field. This baseball stadium is home to the well-known National League Baseball team, the Chicago Cubs. Even though the Cubs are not known for winning pennants or championships, they have changed Chicago in many ways.

The Chicago Cubs were organized in the early 1870's by William A. Hulbert. Their original name was the White Stockings, and later changed to the Cubs in 1902 after a newspaper used the Cubs as a nickname. Later on, Philip K. Wrigley bought the Cubs from Charles Weeghman. Weeghman Park, as it was known, changed to the Cubs Park and in 1926 it became Wrigley Field, a name that would last and is still the same today. Wrigley Field was built in 1914 and is the second oldest ballpark still active in the country.

The Cubs have affected Chicago and baseball. Many great players of different races have played for the team including Albert Spalding, Hack Wilson, Fergie Jenkins, Andre Dawson, Rick Sutcliffe, Ernie Banks, Sammy Sosa, Kerry Wood, Carlos Zambrano, Mark Prior, and many others. All of these people with different backgrounds have a unique relationship with Chicago. For example, when you go to a home game at Wrigley Field, you will always see at least one Dominican Republic flag for Sammy, Carlos Zambrano, and all the other players from there. Such a variety of cultures over the past one hundred years has attracted many to the games. After Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, all the men-including baseball players- went to war. As a result of this, attendance in ballparks went down. This is what prompted Wrigley with an idea. He, along with the Cubs coach at the time. Ken Sells, suggested a women's baseball team and the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League was formed. Attendance in all the

ballparks increased and one of the four main teams played in Illinois, the Rockford Peaches. The change in gender helped baseball owners get through what could have been a hard time.

The Cubs have impacted the children of this city with their reading program that they sponsor with Chicago Public School Children (just like the Chicago Bulls). The Cubs players and coaches read books with kids and show them how much fun reading is. Having the players reading to the children encourages them because most elementary students look up to athletes as their role models. This reading program has helped many and will in future years.

Whenever there is a story, the media is there to cover it. For sports, the media puts the games on television or covers the highlights in newspapers. WGN radio or 720 AM is home to the Chicago Cubs and covers every game including a pre and post show. Harry Carey was a spokesperson for WGN and attracted many listeners. Among other commentators are third base legend Ron Santo, Cubs pitcher Steve Stone, and Harry Carey's grandson Chip Carey. *The Chicago Tribune* owns the Cubs as well as WGN TV/Radio, which provide coverage of the games and all the news about the Cubs. In the regular baseball season Fox Channel 12 will show Cubs games on Saturdays. Many shows have arisen because of the Cubs. For example. Fox Sports Network has about 2 or 3 shows just about the Cubs including pre and post shows. The Cubs have a website with articles written by sports journalist and analyzers. The Chicago Cubs have a great impact on the media and always will. But their influence does not end there, but carries into the neighborhood they play in.

One of the most well known neighborhoods on the North Side of Chicago is Wrigleyville. Wrigleyville was built upon the creation of Wrigley Field. In this neighborhood, almost everything is about the Cubs. There are bars, stores, restaurants, and other things. Bars are named after the team such as the Cubby Bear which has been in business for over twenty years.

Surrounding building owners have fumed their rooftops into extra seating for fans eager to watch their beloved Cubs. Wrigleyville is a prominent neighborhood and is known for its relationship with Wrigley Field.

The Chicago Cubs have affected the city's economics as well. Every year, the Cubs bring in millions of dollars of revenue. Every game sells out tickets, and at each game there are vendors everywhere. There are parking lots all around Wrigley Field, which charge up to twenty dollars for a parking spot. Every year season tickets are always sold out and the Cubs make millions with stores including their store online.

As you can see, the Cubs have a big effect on Chicago. Even though they have not won the World Series since 1908, it does not matter. They still have the support of the fans and Chicago. Every year they manage to sell out. They could be in last place and the stadium would still be full. That is because there is hope. Like Chicago Cubs' star Sammy Sosa says, "Baseball's been very, very good to me." He could say the same about Cubs being good to Chicago because of their great relationship with the city. [From Art Ahrens and Eddie Gold, 1985-1990 The Renewal Era Cubs; Warren Brown, The Chicago Cubs; Pete Cava, Tales from the Cubs Dugout; "Chicago Cubs History" <http://www.geocities.com/cubsfanz1/> (Dec. 30, 2003); Chicago Cubs Official Website, <http://www.cubs.com> (Jan. 7, 2004); Chicago Cubs "Wrigley Field History and Information", http://cubs.mlb.com/NASApp/mlb/chc/ballpark/chc_ballpark_history.jsp (Jan. 7, 2004); Aaron Frisch, The History of the Chicago Cubs; Derek Gentile, The Complete Chicago Cubs; Barry Gifford, The Neighborhood of Baseball; William Hageman and Warren Wilbert, Chicago Cubs; Jerome Holtzman and George Vass, The Chicago Cubs Encyclopedia; Mark Jacob, Wrigley Field; Jim Langford, The Game is Never Over – An Appreciative History of the Chicago Cubs, 1948-1980; Bob Logan, More Tales from the Cubs Dugout; Doug Myers,

Essential Cubs; Larry Names, Bury My Heart at Wrigley Field; Curt Smith, Storied Stadiums – Baseball’s History Through its Ballparks; Arthur A. Ahrens, “How the Cubs Got Their Name,” *Chicago History* (Spring 1976); Chicago Tribune Magazine, (Ap. 9, 2000).]